

**USAID/GEO**  
**Guyana Economic Opportunities**

**Tourism Marketing Workshop  
in preparation for the  
World Travel Market**

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*Submitted by:*  
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## **Agenda**

# **GTA MARKETING WORKSHOP**

**October 10, 2003**

## **Introductions**

**9:00 – 9:15**

- Introduce Presenters
- Introduce Attendees
- Objectives of Workshop

## **The Business of Tourism**

**9:15 – 9:40**

- Why invest in Tourism?
- What do you invest in?
  - o Product Quality/Importance of International Standards
  - o Marketing
- The Business Model for Tourism

## **Tourism Marketing**

**9:40 – 11:00**

### **Global Trends**

- The New Traveler
- Key Markets for Guyana
- Package Interests in Key Markets
- Distribution Channels & Roles in Key Markets
- How to Develop Markets
- What is the role of the suppliers in Destination Marketing

### **Packaging**

- What is a package?
- Why package?
- Importance of Packaging to Guyana?
- Elements of a Package
- How to Price Packages

### **E-Marketing**

- E-marketing Definition
- Online Trends in the Tourism Industry

## **Break**

**11:00 – 11:15**

## **Guyana Assessment**

**11:15 – 12:00**

### **The Guyana Experience**

- Georgetown
- Nature
- Culture
- People
- Accommodation
- Transportation
- Interpretation
- Guyana's Unique Selling Features

### **Guyana's Competitiveness**

- Product/Market Match
- Product Quality
- Pricing Position

## **Lunch Break**

**12:00 – 13:00**

## **Guyana Marketing Strategy**

**13:00 – 14:15**

### **Guyana Challenges**

- Market Position
- Market Constraints & Risks
- Limited Marketing Expertise
- Institutional Constraints
- Funding Constraints
- Product Constraints

### **The Opportunity**

- How to Build a More Effective Approach to International Markets
  - Elements of an effective Marketing Program
  - An Example in Action - WTM
- Elements of a Realistic Short-term Marketing Strategy for Guyana
  - Create a new image and positioning statement for Guyana to be used in all marketing activities.
  - Invest sales, marketing and packaging efforts on motivated international markets that are less sensitive to Guyana's external negative image – namely UK, Germany, USA & Canada (non-Guyanese).
  - Continue with current sales approach targeting Guyanese nationals, with the addition of new packaging directions.
  - Undertake a communications program in the UK, Germany, USA, Canada and the Caribbean which ensure positive stories of Guyana are featured on a regular basis, to the leisure and business travelers as well as the returning Guyanese.

- Establish a Product Development program for International Market Readiness
- Upgrade Interpretative Experiences in Guyana
- Match the right products to the right markets
- Develop packaging which focuses on Guyana's unique selling features
- Implement a modernized e-marketing approach
- Create a mechanism for cooperation between private sector/public sector
- Define and apply Standards for businesses working in the international markets
- Develop support programs for businesses to meet standards

***Break***

***14:15 – 14:30***

**NEXT STEPS**

**14:30 – 16:00**

## **Presentation**

## **Trip Report**



# **Report on GEO Guyana Tourism Project**

*Prepared by GEO Consultant, Cathy Holler*

## **Week One: September 28 – October 5, 2003**

### **Monday - Sunday: Georgetown**

The first week in Guyana was spent in Georgetown. This week was extremely busy, primarily focused on inspecting hotels in Georgetown and meeting with tour operator suppliers and GTA/THAG/Iwokrama/GEO staff. I stayed in the following hotels this week: Roraima Residence Inn, Cara Inn, Radisson Inn, Oceanview, Grand Coastal Inn, and the Le Meridien Pegasus. Additionally, I toured the Cara Lodge, Cara Suites, Bransville Suites and Hotel Tower.

#### ***Hotel Review This Week***

Of all of the hotels I saw, only two I would completely exclude from international marketing activities – the Oceanview and the Radisson Inn ( a fake Radisson).

At the Oceanview the rooms were not well maintained. I ended up moving 4 times that night as either the toilet wouldn't flush, the air conditioning would not work, and in one room the wiring was faulty. I finally settled in for the night in the fourth room, complete with a bathroom with sloping floors, counter tops falling apart and brown stains from the rich brown water coming from the taps. For good reason I avoided taking a shower or washing my face! There was no security at the hotel, only a young front desk clerk and an open entrance with no doors so anyone could walk into the hotel at any time. There were large bugs roaming the hall floors which opened to the lobby area, the doors to the guest rooms were cheap plywood with a spacious opening between the door and the dirty carpet, making noise from the lobby very easy to hear in the room and an inviting escape for the bugs! This hotel did have a restaurant, outdoor pool and is attached to the largest meeting space in Guyana, but the hotel is falling apart, and it is only 11 years old.

At the Radisson, though they did have locked doors at the entrance, I would rate the accommodation as 1star, with poor sanitary conditions, dirty chairs, dirty carpet, dirty dishes, dirty sink, a bed made of foam placed on top of a plywood board and poor maintenance (broken glass window taped up; toilet seat that fell off onto the floor; dirty sink and taps, dirty towels in the bathroom that had not been changed, no meal facilities other than room service breakfast and a pizza delivery service. The power went out the day I was there and the fan they provided barely cooled the room. This hotel gets most of their business over the internet.

All of the other hotels would be acceptable to the international market, though none would be classified higher than a 3 star and a few would fit into a 2 star category. The newest properties were understandably the nicest – the Roraima Residence Inn and the Grand Coastal Inn – they had all of the amenities that the business traveller would require. The Roraima Inn was 5 minutes away from the main business area of Georgetown, with the Grand Coastal situated a 15 minute drive from Georgetown, along the coastline of Guyana. The Le Meridien Pegasus is located across from the Canadian Embassy and the U.S. Embassy and is the primary hotel for business travellers. They are also the best choice for most international travellers due to having the restaurant, lounge and pool facilities plus an ambiance suited to the international traveller. However, the hotel did have some noticeable wear & tear in the rooms, thus would not rank as a 4 star hotel, though if upgraded it could carry this rating.

### ***Tour Operator Review This Week***

I had meetings with Wilderness Explorer, Outdoor Expeditions, Roraima Tours, Wonderland Tours, Rainforest Tours, and Dagrón Tours. Wilderness Explorer was the only tour operator with an extensive history of working in the international market and possessing the marketing materials and knowledge required to effectively market and service the international market. Outdoor Expeditions actually provides guiding services for Wilderness Explorer but is also trying to start doing their own tours from Trinidad focused on student groups. Rainforest Tours operates day tours to Kaieteur Falls and Orindiuk Falls as well as expedition-style hiking tours, including their popular 5 day Overland Trek to Kaieteur Falls. They have some direct international clientele, but also sell their tours to Wilderness Explorer, who then resells these tours to international tour operators. Wonderland Tours is one of the oldest tour operators in Guyana, but is a very small operation that primarily focuses on the Guyanese nationals returning to Guyana for their vacation, with most of his business coming from New York. Dagrón Tours is a relatively new tour operator who has had limited experience marketing internationally. Their focus is on multi-destination packages combining Caribbean and other South American countries with Guyana and they work with camping groups and a very low end of the international market as well as vacationing Guyanese nationals. Dagrón Tours also owns Sloth Island, a rustic facility I visited later during this trip. They are planning to attend WTM for the first time in 2003. Roraima Tours is owned by Roraima Airways who is trying to develop packaged vacations featuring the Roraima Inn, Roraima Airways excursions and Arrowpoint Lodge, which they also own. Their focus has primarily been Guyanese nationals in New York and Toronto but they are interested in expanding into the non-Guyanese market in North America.

### ***Other Meetings This Week***

- On Monday I met with GEO staff as well as the Board of THAG to review the activity plan for the week.
- On Tuesday morning I met with Tom Whitney to review the terms of reference and review some suggestions I had re an event around WTM.
- Also on Tuesday I met with THAG/GTA staff to review marketing activities planned for the future and to review planning for WTM and the workshop.
- On Wednesday afternoon I met with senior staff from Iwokrama, which was arranged by Tony Thorne of Wilderness Explorers.
- Friday evening I went to the GEO TGIF gathering and was able to meet briefly with the Minister of Tourism at the function. We agreed that we would try to get together on Sunday night for dinner, and he would be in touch with me at the hotel.

### **Sunday: Kaieteur Falls**

***The Operation:*** The flight to the Falls was an hour long, over the rainforest each way. The plane was quite noisy and there were no headsets so it was hard for the pilot to give any narrative of sights though he did what he could. The pilot was originally from New Zealand and had been flying for Roraima Airways on and off for many years so was very skilled at flying in this region.. The plane landed at the runway near Kaieteur Falls and since there was another company's group already there (Rainforest Tours), the only ranger available was with them so did not lead our group. Thus the pilot led the group to the three different viewpoints and gave some narrative of the vegetation in the area. There was some water and juice available which the pilot offered to the group. There was a snack but this was provided by the group that was on my flight not by Roraima Tours. Washrooms were available at the airstrip in a covered picnic area.

***Kaieteur Falls:*** The falls are spectacular – the longest single drop waterfall in the world, five times higher than Niagara Falls. There are three viewpoints for the falls, all accessible by 5 – 10 minute easy walks between each viewpoint. The viewpoints are in their natural state – there are no guard rails, no benches, no concessions. As an experience, Kaieteur is certainly impressive. I do have a concern for safety here as if there are larger volumes of tourists visiting, there are going to have to be guard rails built as it is just too easy for someone to go over the edge and the bottom is thousands of feet below! Apparently, the government is considering some form of commercial enterprise near the falls, likely a hotel or lodge and there was some rumbling about a casino (?). So for the person that wants to see the falls before development impacts the setting, now is the time to visit!

***Challenges with Tour:*** Flight delays and cancellations due to lack of paying passengers are apparently not uncommon. This is what all of the flightseeing companies do. They generally need 8 paying passengers to operate the flights. This is a challenge when trying to sell this experience to tour operators as often they will have a few clients that are booked on a set itinerary. If Kaieteur Falls is promoted as one of the must see attractions in Guyana, there are going to be quite a few disappointed clients if these flights are cancelled. The price for this tour was \$150 U.S. per person, based on 8 paying passengers. This is a rate that those that own the planes seem to charge. Another company charges \$165 U.S. per person based on the same package because they don't own the plane.

***Recommendations:*** I suggest that the flightseeing companies all agree to one net price for tour operators for the flights. Therefore, they can pool their passengers if one company does not have enough passengers to make the flight profitable. Or, they will have to increase their cost of the flights in order to operate with a lower minimum of passengers. A more acceptable minimum would be to operate with a minimum of 4 passengers, instead of the current 8 passengers.

At the end of the day, I transferred to Le Meridien Pegasus hotel. I met with the Minister of Tourism, Manzoor Nadir and Gerry Gouvia (THAG President) for dinner at the Roraima Residence Inn. We talked about the challenges for Guyana's marketing due to the lack of international marketing and the options the government was considering, including a proposal from a German firm to handle representation for Guyana in Germany, plus the proposal previously received from a firm in the U.S. back in 1997. The Minister said that if the right plan was available, there may be more money available from the government and funding partners, potentially around \$500,000 US. The current budget is around \$100,000.

## **Week 2: October 6 – 12, 2003**

### ***Monday – Thursday: Coastal Rainforest***

#### **Monday- Georgetown to Arrowpoint Resort:**

This week I ventured into the Coastal rain forest regions of Guyana. Early morning I was transferred by van to the boat launch for Arrowpoint, along with the owner, Gerry Gouvia and several guests. The boat trip was about an hour long through a jungle waterway, with a stop enroute at Santa Mission. Here we visited the elementary school and the headmaster and were able to buy some crafts made by Santa Mission's Amerindians. The schools patron is Roraima Tours, thus they include this stop on all of the trips to Arrowpoint. Wilderness Explorer also includes this as a stop in their program to Timberhead Resort. Santa Mission is very tidy and the village is made up of thatched roof buildings. Thus, this is an appealing stop for tourists as it provides a taste of the Amerindian culture in the kind of setting a tourist would be comfortable in,

without being too commercial. Upon arrival at Arrowpoint, we were welcomed with a fruit punch and taken to our thatched cabins. Overall, I was pleasantly surprised with the facility, as I had already been hearing by many that this resort was designed for the Guyanese nationals and locals on vacation. I found the overall experience quiet and enjoyable, from the resort facilities such as mountain bikes, relaxing hammocks, a guided hike and canoe excursion in the jungle, fishing, comfortable cabins with private bathrooms, hot showers, generator power and delicious food. We did an evening walk through the jungle with headlamps needed on the way back – giving us a chance to observe some nocturnal animals. Dinner was served buffet-style on the beach with seating in front of a huge bonfire and torch lights lit around the beach property. Gerry has also built a facility where the tradition of making Cassava bread is demonstrated by the Amerindians and can be sampled by the visitor. This was a very interesting demonstration and during my entire trip to Guyana, this is the only location where I was provided with this demonstration, despite the fact that it was discussed throughout the country as an important Amerindian tradition. This resort is definitely well suited to the international market and is market-ready, though for the purist adventurer the resort may potentially be considered too commercial.

### **Tuesday – Timberhead Resort & Shanklands Resort:**

At 8am this morning Dave and I were taken by boat to Timberhead Resort. Owned by Le Meridien, this property is more rustic than Arrowpoint. It has no electricity, no private bathrooms and very little in the way of activities. However, this property was quite rundown and had no guests when we were there. Later we heard from Le Meridien that they may be giving up this resort as it is losing too much money. Le Meridien has new owners who may not want to continue to maintain ownership of Timberhead. We had breakfast with the Interim Manager who provided us with some good insight into the challenges of operating a facility such as Timberhead. We then continued our journey by boat. Late morning we docked at a location where the Shanklands Resort vehicle picked us up. This was not really a dock, rather a small mud slope covered with logs. Thus from a first impression, this is not the most attractive way to bring tourists in, though the adventurous will find it ok. The vehicle that picked us up was not very clean in or out, had poor shocks and definitely would not be acceptable for fussy clients. The ride to Shanklands was very rough through the jungle, however, the driver's dialogue was enjoyable and the jungle was interesting. If the vehicle had been a bit more comfortable, this would likely be something that most markets would enjoy. As it is now – it is best suited to the client with an adventurous spirit. Upon arrival at Shanklands we had lunch with the General Manager and had a chance to learn about the property, its history and challenges. The resort itself is very open, with sprawling grassy lawns, flowering bushes, trees, and cottage buildings reminiscent of a colonial estate. The resort overlooks the expansive Essequibo River, so has wonderful views. Down the hill from the resort, is the resort's own sandy beach and boat dock. Kayaks are available for guests' use, as well as a beach side bathroom facility and ping pong table.

In our discussions with the owners, it became apparent that they are struggling to keep the resort going as their occupancies have been dropping over the last few years. They have been using their other businesses to financially support the resort, but the wear & tear is starting to be noticeable on the property.

This was starting to be a common theme with the resorts. Arrowpoint was only surviving because Roraima's air service company was profitable and thus covering the losses of the resort. Timberhead is ready to close due to lack of business.

### **Wednesday: Sloth Island & Baganara Resort**

Early this morning we were taken on a very enjoyable interpretative walk in the jungles backing onto Shanklands. The resort's Amerindian guide Charlie, was excellent – an example of the kind of guide that needs to be doing all interpretative walks for the resorts – he really added an element of his culture to the interpretation of the vegetation, birdlife and wildlife found in the jungle. After the walk we had breakfast with the owners, toured the other chalets and the dormitory facility they use for school groups and then departed the resort by boat.

Our destination was Sloth Island, where we were to have lunch. Of all the places visited during our stay in Guyana, this is the only location outside of Georgetown that I can truly say was not ready for tourists. Not sure why we went there, but this little island had dilapidated huts and no activities on the island. Food was brought in for us from the mainland for lunch (which was pretty bad) and we spent a maximum of about 45 minutes on the island. Apparently they cater to groups that want to camp on the island and only need rustic facilities. They also had several caged ocelots on the property for guests to see. I later told Dagon Tours, the owner of the property that though interesting to see, having caged animals was not likely the best thing to have for international tourists with an interest in eco-tourism.

Early afternoon we departed by boat towards Baganara. We stopped briefly in Bartica for a refreshment at the local outdoor bar overlooking the river. This is a city on the river where most of the miners stay when they have time off. Not really where most tourists would go, but an interesting experience none the less!

We arrived at Baganara Resort mid-afternoon and were immediately impressed with the quality of the facility. It was the best resort we had seen so far and was equivalent to many of the superior facilities found in the Caribbean. They were very well prepared for our meeting and had their three senior management there. They had all of their marketing materials and were prepared to spend the afternoon and evening with us to properly assess their product and have us make recommendations. We had a great day with them and believe that there were some very valuable outcomes to the meeting for them. One interesting fact is that they also own Trans Guyana Airways and are partners with Rockview Resort. They also have their own tour company and are looking at expanding their packages and marketing to the North American, non-Guyanese market. They were the only resort with satellite internet connections as well as meeting space. They have the infrastructure to create interesting packages with coastal and interior resorts as well as connect the resorts with flight services from the airport as well as from their own airstrip.

### **Thursday: Georgetown**

Today we traveled by boat and car back to Georgetown with the Baganara management. Enroute, they made an unscheduled stop and took us to an interesting private museum which had many artifacts of Guyana's past. This facility also had a dining area and B& B for guests which cater to local expats. This would be an interesting stop for most tourists as a refreshment/stretch stop so needs to be considered as a potential tourist experience.

This afternoon we arrived at Le Meridien Pegasus and met with the management of the property. This hotel is Georgetown's only branded chain hotel and is the primary hotel for any non-Guyanese business people to stay at. It is a bit rundown for a Meridien quality hotel, but it has the hotel facilities expected by most international travelers – restaurants, lounge, outdoor pool and business center. The hotel has been struggling with occupancies of 52% in the summer, but this past Sept and Oct have improved and they are averaging 70% occupancy. They are more than

willing to host tour operators and media at the hotel on familiarization tours and are a willing partner in promoting Guyana.

A challenge we identified with the hotel is that though they are the primary accommodation for most business visitors they are not able to offer their guests opportunities to take excursions to explore the country, other than to Timberhead Resort. Part of improving Guyana's image is to have the business guests introduced to the product and have them return home with a positive impression of Guyana. Le Meridien does have a concession in the hotel for selling tours that has been provided to Shell Beach Adventures. Unfortunately, Shell Beach Adventures is not interested in selling other companies tours as they focus on their own eco-tours to see the turtles at Shell Beach. Thus, though the hotel is where most of the international visitors stay, there is no tour desk available to introduce the visitor to all that Guyana has to offer such as resorts and sightseeing excursions to Kaieteur and Orindiuk Falls. This was discussed with the hotel management and may result in a new concession being established to allow the sale of all activities to their guests.

### **Friday: Georgetown Workshop**

The workshop was extremely well-attended. We had 41 persons attend, including Donald Sinclair, Executive Director of the GTA who attended the morning session. The workshop was held at the Cara Inn in one of their smaller meetings rooms, so it was crowded and the room tended to get very warm, even with the air conditioning. The screen they provided to us for the presentation was actually a sheet draped over a board, so it was difficult to make the presentation look professional. Coffee, tea, juices and snacks were available during break times outside of the room and a buffet lunch was served in the outdoor restaurant. The workshop did not end until 5pm, even though the official part ended at 4pm. There were many questions and the group didn't seem to want to go!

### **Saturday: Cathy Off to the Rupununi/Dave headed back to Canada**

Early afternoon, I departed to the airport for my flight to Karanambo. I landed on a airstrip in the heart of the Rupununi and was met by Diane McTurk, the legendary owner of the Karanambo ranch and her staff. Diane has been living amongst the Amerindian community in the Rupununi for the past 25 years and is herself an attraction that lures visitors and media to her remote location. We traveled in a well-used 4x4 over rough terrain to the ranch. After settling into my very comfortable and rustic cabin that included a private bathroom and a shower, Diane walked me around the complex. After a delicious dinner prepared by her Amerindian staff, we ventured out by boat to explore the waterways, observe the birdlife, view caiman in the rivers and try to find the giant river otters that she has been instrumental in rehabilitating back into the wildlife after they were injured. Also, we ventured into a secluded lake area filled with a variety of bird life, caiman and giant lily pads floating on the water. When it became dark, the large water lilies began to open up. Afterwards, we traveled by boat back to the ranch compound. In just a short time of being at the ranch, I was totally comfortable with the environment and believe that this experience, though rustic, is one of Guyana's treasures and will be very much enjoyed by most international visitors for its tremendous bird life and unique accommodation and ambiance. The ranch is able to comfortably accommodate 8 – 10 persons primarily in double beds. Diane has turned over the day to day management of the ranch to her nephew and his wife, but is still involved in spending time with the customers. Diane is getting on in age and it will be a sad day when she is no longer around to endow her unique personality on the facility.

### **Sunday: Travel by Boat and Jeep to Iwokrama**

Early this morning I departed by boat with Diane for a 90 minute boat trip up the Rupununi River. Upon disembarking from the boat. We were met by a driver from Iwokrama. Diane left us to return to the ranch and the driver and I traveled north along a gravel road for several hours to Iwokrama. Enroute, we stopped in Surama Village, an Amerindian community and met with Sidney Alcott, a leader in the community who has helped to advance the tourism opportunities for Surama. Sidney toured us around the community, introducing me to the current tourist accommodation they have in the village (a rustic bunkhouse currently used by many Wilderness Explorer groups) plus showed us the new facility being built just outside of the village, which will be open in March. This new wooden circular facility with a thatched roof will certainly be a hit with the international market – it is small, though comfortable with outstanding views of the surrounding mountains and jungles and a close walk to the village and hiking trails. Before departing Surama Village, Sidney's son Ron joined us. Ron is a Ranger/Guide at Iwokrama and was to be my guide for my entire stay at Iwokrama. We drove one hour north to the boat launch along a well-maintained gravel road through Iwokrama. At the end of the highway we took a 5 minute boat ride to the Iwokrama Center.

The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development is situated in the heart of Guyana's lush Iwokrama rainforest. In 1989 the Guyana government provided this one million acre pristine rainforest as a gift to the world. Today, Iwokrama is the only living laboratory entirely dedicated to the international community for the study of conservation and development of the rainforest.

Accommodation in Iwokrama is in comfortable cabins, complete with private bathrooms and a shower. I was somewhat surprised at the comfort of the guest cabins as I was expecting a much more rustic facility. There are a few rustic cabins and dormitory-style facilities but these are reserved primarily for staff, rangers and researchers. The main center at Iwokrama is a circular, two-story thatched roof building that houses the research facilities and administration offices. Upstairs is a large, open area dining area.

During the time that I was at Iwokrama there were guide training courses going on being operated by Trekforce from the U.K., so many of the Amerindian guides from surrounding communities were there during mealtimes. One activity that I felt was missing at Iwokrama was an evening interpretive program that could easily be provided in the dining area, focused on research that Iwokrama is undertaking in the rainforest as well as explaining the vision of Iwokrama. I was the only guest so it is understandable if they did not do this for me, but for any groups coming to Iwokrama, this would be an excellent component to include as a part of the experience. Food was plentiful and good with the guides eating from a buffet and I being privileged to have my meals served to me at the table!

In the evening Ron Alcott took me by boat to go caiman spotting as well as to observe nocturnal jungle life.

### **Week 3: October 13 – 15, 2003**

#### **Monday: Travel by Jeep to Rockview/Rainforest Canopy**

Early in the morning Ron took me on a hiking excursion up Turtle Mountain to view the rainforest canopy. We traveled by boat for 15 minutes to reach the trailhead, then hiked for over an hour to the viewpoint where we had a picnic lunch! Humidity and a steep climb sure burned

off breakfast so we were ready for an early lunch! We returned back to the lodge early afternoon, then after the boat transfer back to the jeep, we began the one hour drive south to the new Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, a 154 meter long, state-of-the-art walkway suspended above the forest floor. The management of the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway and the hammock campsite is being handled through a unique partnership between Wilderness Explorer, Rock View Lodge and Surama Village.

A further 30 minute drive south brought us back into the Rupununi and the Rockview Lodge. The lodge is extremely comfortable and in fact, other than Baganara, had the most upscale resort accommodation I had encountered in Guyana. This environmentally-friendly lodge is made up of two guest houses which can accommodate up to 20 persons in 8 rooms though they prefer 10 – 12 guests at a time. They have an open air dining area, a guest-only lounge area and a public bar for guests and locals. They also have the only swimming pool in the Rupununi and offer trail riding, hiking, and boating on the nearby river.

### **Tuesday: Rupununi Exploring; Fly back to Georgetown**

Early this morning one of the guides hiked with me up a nearby nature trail that they had developed which offers excellent views of the Rupununi and the distant mountains. They are also creating an outpost camp for guests that want to experience one night away from the lodge in a hammock-style camp, complete with an outhouse with a view! The newly upgraded highway from Lethem to Georgetown runs directly past Rockview, thus they are capitalizing on this new business opportunity for truck and drive-by traffic from Brazil by building a roadhouse on the side of the highway that provides basic hammock accommodation for budget travelers, and a café and bar.

### **Wednesday: Departure to New York**



**Appendix 1**  
**Search Engines**

## Search Engine Marketing Best Practices for Optimal Results

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is the cornerstone of an effective emarketing strategy. Strong search engine positioning is one of the best, if not the best tool for reaching a well targeted audience due to the highly contextual nature of searches. SEM is one of the few tools that enable marketers to place their value propositions in front of an audience that is specifically looking for what an organization provides at the time they are looking for it. Furthermore, since SEM is a non-intrusive method of marketing, consumers do not see it as advertising and as a result are more receptive to your value propositions.

Effective SEM is comprised of 2 primary strategies:

1. Organic (or content based) strategies
2. Promotional based strategies

To maximize the potential of SEM and capitalize on this highly targeted traffic, marketers must understand how to harness the full potential of both Organic and Promotional based SEM strategies. The remainder of this white paper addresses the core building blocks of a successful SEM strategy:

1. Preparing your website for top performance in Search Engines
2. Establishing SEM objectives and measurement criteria
3. Organic strategies and Promotional strategies
4. Implementing your SEM strategy

### PREPARING YOUR WEBSITE FOR TOP PERFORMANCE IN SEARCH ENGINES

Many companies overlook the need to optimize their website for Search Engine performance **before** beginning their SEM efforts. For top performance consider the following website optimization points.

#### The Title Tag

The title tag is arguably the most important part of optimizing your website. To optimize it for the search engines keywords should be included here in the first or second position. Limit these to under 40 characters and less than 8 keywords. Ideally every page should have a different title that is supported by visible content on the page. It should appear first on your page after the <head> tag.

#### The Description Tag

The meta description tag should follow directly after the title tag before all other programming. This ensures maximum relevance because of its prominence. The meta description tag should include your most important keywords, but still be people friendly (limit the sales pitch, keep it informative and intriguing) as a number of important search engines will use this for your site description in their listings. If you neglect to include a meta description tag, the engine will simply grab the first 200 characters on the page for its description. The meta keyword tag should include various keyword combinations and synonyms, but be careful to avoid excessive

repetition. Another hint is to avoid commas. This is in order to increase the chance of matching a string of words or a phrase that someone may enter. Like title tags, to achieve maximum effectiveness every page should include unique description tags that are supported by its visible content.

### The Keyword Tag

Like the meta Description Tag, the meta keyword tag should follow directly after the description tag before all other programming. This is the least important of all the meta tags. Follow the same rules as the title and description tags ensuring that keywords match visible content on the page.

### Don't forget Alt Tags, Comment Tags, and Href Tags

Some engines include the text in these tags in their relevancy ranking so it can be helpful to make sure that there are some important, relevant keywords in these places. Alt tags should be utilized anyway for greater accessibility for the visually impaired. The major engines don't index comment tags, but a lot of others do, so it's worthwhile to include useful text here.

### Visible Text is Critical

Here are two primary ways to code your visible text to optimize it for the search engines:

1. To increase the importance of certain keywords, place them in header tags <H1> to <H6> and occasionally highlight them with <strong> tags.
2. Minimize the coding that appears before the visible text. In general, search engines tend to weight the text that appears at the top of your pages more heavily than that which comes further down. The further down in the HTML document it is buried, the less weight it will carry for relevance with most search engines. It also makes it easier for the search engines that do not use a description tag to locate relevant text to include as a description.

### Use of JavaScript

Using JavaScript at the top of your documents may impact your relevancy. Some search engines may index your code first, then your HTML copy next. That means they may put the biggest priority on scripting code, rather than your nice opening paragraphs that contain the important terms you hope will be found. One thing that should prevent JavaScript from being indexed is to surround the code with a comment tag. In fact, that's standard practice to keep non-JavaScript capable browsers from seeing JavaScript. Nevertheless, the code can sometimes still get through. We recommend moving JavaScript to the bottom of your page, whenever possible. That will at least help ensure that it won't be the first text encountered. An even better solution is to make use of .js files. These are "external" files that contain your JavaScript code. You refer to them from within your page so the JavaScript code is only loaded by browsers that understand JavaScript. Since most search engines don't read JavaScript, they should never import the information.

### Use of Style Tags

Like JavaScript, style tags in the body of the document can dilute the effectiveness of your content and hurt your relevancy ranking. The best solution, like the .js files for JavaScript, is to create external cascading style sheets in the form of .css files.

### Beware of Problematic URL's

Many sites make use of dynamic delivery methods. A problem is that these methods often use URLs that include a ? symbol in them. That ? symbol keeps many search engines from crawling web pages. Other symbols that are often used include &, %, + and \$. Some search engines may also avoid indexing URLs that have a reference to the CGI bin directory, such as <http://www.website.com/cgi-bin/page1.htm> or <http://www.website.com/cgi/page1.htm>. The reason search engines avoid these directories and URLs with CGI escape characters such as the ? symbol is to avoid "spider traps." In some cases, a spider may stumble into a situation where the database or CGI process feeds it an infinite number of URLs. The spider keeps crawling, impacting it and the host server. If your database program uses these, seek a workaround in order to make your content accessible. For example, Apache is a popular web server software which has a special "rewrite" module that will allow you to translate URLs containing ? symbols into search engine friendly addresses. The rewrite module (mod\_rewrite) is not compiled into the software by default, but many hosting companies add it anyway. For those that don't, it is an easy task to upgrade the server with the module.

### Use of Frames

Search engines have a tough time with frames. Using frames either prevents them from finding pages within a web site, or it causes them to send visitors into a site without the proper frame "context" being established. The best advice for frames – get rid of them. However, if you insist on using frames here are some things to keep in mind.

- Always use a title tag for every page
- The Index page (which contains the frameset) must contain meta tags and a <noframes> section. By placing content in these areas of the master page, you can at least give the search engines something to read.
- Treat every page which resides in a frame as a possible point of entry, always give your visitor a way of returning to the master frameset page.

### Use of Flash

It is important to remember that pages designed entirely using Flash can fair poorly in the search engines, as all coding and links will be essentially invisible to a visiting spider. However a hybrid page, consisting of Flash and HTML elements will respond to the search engines without major difficulties. Thus it all boils down to a design philosophy issue. Do you wow your visitors with Flashy content and live with the fact that the site can fare poorly in the search engines, or do you work within the limitations of the search engine's spiders?

### Link Popularity

More and more importance is being put upon the sites that link to you when search engines are determining relevance and ranking. It's very important to establish those links. The simplest and cheapest way to do so is to include a reciprocal links page. This is the web, and reciprocity rules. Traffic you think you're giving away will in turn come back to you.

### Site Map

Some search engines will only dig three clicks deep into your site. In order to get every page on your site indexed it is very important to include a link to a site map on your home page. This ensures that every page is only two clicks away and speeds up the rate at which your site is crawled. Many search engines also use outbound and

inbound links to determine page relevancy so getting all your pages in the index is likely to increase your ranking.

## ESTABLISHING SEM OBJECTIVES AND MEASUREMENT CRITERIA

There are many purposes for driving traffic to your website including advertising revenues, user registrations, newsletter subscriptions, sales leads and sales conversions. What you need to always keep in mind though is that if your SEM efforts do not contribute to increased revenue, you are wasting your money. Your SEM objective and corresponding measurements should be stated in terms of business performance such as number of new customers, new leads, orders, etc.

Start with your business objectives and overall marketing strategy. Look at SEM as a tactic within your marketing repertoire and set realistic SEM objectives. Setting clear, measurable objectives for your SEM campaign will provide you with a tool to measure your success and help identify areas within your SEM strategy that require revision. Here are some commonly used metrics that you can use to help measure the performance of your SEM efforts.

Conversion rate - **Visitors who purchase (subscribe, etc.) are divided by total visitors**

This measures how many visitors to your site convert to a sale or desired action.

**Cost per Order (CPO)** – SEM spent is divided by the total number of orders  
This measures how much you spend per order on SEM

**Cost per Action (CPA)** – SEM spent is divided by total number of actions  
This measures how much you spend per action on SEM

**Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)** – Revenue is divided by SEM spent  
This measures how much revenue you generated per dollar you spent on SEM

**Return on Investment (ROI)** – Profit is divided by SEM spent and multiplied by 100  
This measures the profit efficiency level of your SEM

Any of the above metrics can be used to evaluate your SEM efforts. When selecting the appropriate metrics start with the objectives of your business. CPO and CPA are the most commonly used metrics for measuring success.

## ORGANIC AND PROMOTIONAL SEM STRATEGIES

### Organic SEM Strategies

Quality content is the best way to build **a sustainable long term SEM program**. Unfortunately there are few 'free' search engines & directories these days as most (other than Google) require a payment for submission, inclusion or both. Some engines require an additional cost per click (Looksmart in particular). Regardless of these initial payments, what drives rankings once you are in the Search Engines is page content, link quality and a well designed website. An effective organic strategy

is critical because once you are listed your positioning is low cost, long term and sustainable.

### **Choose the right keywords**

Choosing the right keywords is critical. Many marketers in the tourism industry look at keywords such as 'Travel' and are instantly amazed by the volume of search activity and feel that this is a keyword they need to have. In choosing strategic keywords, you need to think not only about volume of searches, but also level of competition. Most people do not look beyond the first page of search results (generally 10 listings). 90% of searchers performing searches do not look beyond 3 pages (30 results). So, if you are not in the top 30, chances are people are not going to find you. Furthermore, consideration must also be given to the quality of traffic generated by a particular keyword or keyword phrase. Not all keywords deliver qualified traffic. Be sure to do your homework when choosing strategic keywords and keyword phrases and you will be rewarded with top rankings that produce quality traffic to your site.

### **Build a Strong Link Reputation**

Increasingly critical to Organic SEM is link quality or link reputation. Google in particular closely examines the quantity and quality of inbound links (links from other sites) to your site as part of their ranking algorithms. As discussed in the first section of this paper, preparing your Website for Effective SEM, building quality reciprocal links is vitally important to attaining and maintaining top Search Engine results. It cannot be overstated, as part of your SEM strategy it is critical that you build in a capacity for achieving inbound links. A good approach is to identify a variety of sites within your market niche and approach them with a reciprocal linking proposition. Most important, quality is better than quantity. Choose sites that are on topic with your content and sites that have a strong Internet reputation. The sooner you build these reciprocal link relationships the better.

### **Be Patient**

The downside of organic SEM strategies is that top quality rankings take time. Generally you will start seeing initial results within 2 weeks of submissions but it can take up to 12 weeks to get to what we consider the first performance plateau. After that it becomes a game of re-optimizing content and meta tags, focusing on strategic keywords and building link reputation.

Some examples of Organic search engines and directories (note: this is only a sample list intended to provide an overview of the different types of organic search engines and directories):

*Yahoo* – One of the leading human edited search directories on the Internet. Requires an annual non-refundable submission fee for inclusion to their database. Note: Some of the website optimization rules do not apply with Yahoo as searches are limited to listing title and description only. Furthermore, you only get one listing and titles and descriptions are subject to editing by Yahoo with little or no recourse on your part. It's a good idea to speak with an SEM professional about the finer points of submitting to Yahoo **before** you submit.

*Looksmart* – Looksmart is another leading directory. Submission is a one-time cost, but results are based on a cost per click model requiring you to continue to pay to be included in their database. If you stop paying, you stop showing up in the results.

Looksmart is the leading provider of results to MSN and as such is important piece of any Organic SEM effort.

*Inktomi* – A pay for inclusion search engine, Inktomi is another significant source used by Google to qualify sites. With Inktomi you pay per page that you submit with increasing discounts depending on the volume of pages submitted. For large sites they offer an XML direct feed for submissions.

*Google* – Arguably the best search engine on the Internet, Google is the last of the completely free engines. It costs you nothing to submit or to be included in Google. As discussed previously, page content, site optimization and strong link reputation are absolutely critical to good rankings in Google. Top quality results in Google can make or break most SEM efforts as Google accounts for the majority of searches on the Internet and powers many leading portals and search engines, including Yahoo web pages. With that said, if you want to get good results in Google, you will need to invest in paid submission and inclusion programs of the other engines to add to your link quality rankings, in addition to pursuing a reciprocal linking strategy with other on-topic websites.

It is important to note that the Organic based search engines and directories are closely intertwined, each using the others databases as a gauge for determining the quality of your site. For example, Google applies a higher quality ranking to sites that are listed in Yahoo because Yahoo is human edited and the assumption is that sites listed in Yahoo are of quality content and focus. As such it is important to understand these intertwining relationships so that you can maximize your Organic SEM efforts.

### **Promotional SEM Strategies**

Many SEM organizations promote this strategy as the primary SEM strategy because it makes their job easy for getting top rankings for their clients. Aside from selecting the best keywords for your audience, this tactic requires little skill because you simply buy your way to the top. The skill is in ensuring a positive return on investment (ROI) as it is easy to burn up an SEM budget very quickly.

Site optimization and Organic SEM strategies don't really matter much with Promotional based SEM. The positive is that Promotional SEM strategies produce immediate results and can generate a lot of exposure and traffic quickly. The downside is that if not managed carefully it can be very expensive, requires constant management and provides nearly no long-term sustainable positioning.

### **Immediate Positioning**

Top tier pay-per-click bidding services like Overture not only get you to the top immediately, but also syndicate your results across most major search engines and portals worldwide, providing that you bid in the top 3 rankings. This syndication can provide enormous exposure for your site. Because of this pay-per-click bidding services are growing rapidly and service offerings are expanding. Many such systems provide automated management tools which make the task of managing promotional SEM much easier than it used to be. A well researched, well implemented, and well managed promotional SEM strategy can help an organization realize immediate returns and produce healthy ROI's right out of the gate. Furthermore, providing you have good tracking and analysis you can make changes

to your strategy quickly to optimize top performing keywords and phrases and eliminate poor performers.

### **Beware – Promotional SEM can be expensive**

For the travel industry there is a lot of competition, and costs for strategic keywords can be VERY expensive per click. You can manage this closely through the use of tracking id's on each link, but you really need to be on top of it and ensuring that you are getting a conversion resulting in a positive ROI, otherwise you will be losing money faster than you can image. For example, if you want to be listed in the top 3 results in Overture for the keyword 'Travel', you can expect to spend in excess of \$2 USD per click, and this keyword has the potential of delivering THOUSANDS of clicks PER DAY.

### **Management is critical**

Pay-per-click bidding programs require daily management. Engines like Overture are real-time bidding systems and results change by the minute. In order to maintain top 3 listings you need to stay on top of current bids. While you can set automatic bid increases to remain in the top 3, your cost per click may also increase dramatically. You need to micro manage these programs to achieve peak performance.

### **Positioning only while you pay**

Lastly, and in my opinion, the greatest limitation of pay-per-click /bidding engines, is that once you stop paying your search engine placements disappear. You achieve nearly nothing in the way of long standing results in the engines. If you establish a successful program that justifies ongoing investment then this may not be of concern, as you will continue to invest. But keep in mind that prices continue to increase. In September 2001 the minimum bid in Overture was \$0.01 per click. As of the end of 2001 the minimum bid increased to \$0.05 per click. As of spring 2003, minimum bid has increased to \$0.10 per click. Furthermore competition will continue to drive up the price per click.

The key to effective promotional based SEM is to select strategic keywords – ones with little competition, that perform well in terms of traffic quantity and quality, and whose costs are in line with your budget. Then manage the program closely! Some examples of Promotional SEM programs include:

Google Adwords – an auction (or bid for rank) tool that provides you exposure alongside organic Google results. Google's Adword program syndicated partners include AOL, Earthlink, Ask Jeeves and others.

Overture – the premier bid for rank system syndicated across most major search engines and portals worldwide. Overture provides unparalleled exposure but also carries premier pay-per-click pricing.

FindWhat, Kanoodle, Ah-Ha, Sprinks, Search123, and others – what I consider 2<sup>nd</sup> tier bid for rank systems. While costs per click through these services may be lower than that of Overture, so is the exposure you will get.

A sound SEM strategy will make use of both Organic and Promotional strategies, though the specific mix of these strategies will vary significantly from one organization to another based on business objectives and resources. A good



strategy that I have personally employed on various projects is to invest more aggressively in promotional SEM at the beginning of an SEM effort, while aggressively launching an organic SEM effort. As the organic SEM begins to take hold and rankings move up the charts, you can begin reducing promotional SEM investment. Once your Organic SEM is in full swing, use Promotional SEM strategically to shore up weak Organic SEM rankings.

## IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL SEM CAMPAIGN

**Once you have optimized your website for Search Engine performance, established your SEM objectives and measurement criteria, and developed your organic and promotional SEM strategic mix, it's time to implement. Here are a few tips to ensure a successful SEM implementation.**

### Use tracking Codes whenever possible

When preparing your URLs for submission to the search engines it is important to establish tracking codes on the URLs you are submitting. You should use a different tracking code for each URL submitted so that you can clearly track the performance of all inbound links. By having each URL individually tracked you can clearly identify visitors (using persistent and/ or session cookies) and determine if they convert to the desired site objectives.

### **Be patient with Organic SEM**

As mentioned earlier, organic SEM takes time. It is important that you have patience with the process. If you constantly change your keywords and content you will short change your SEM efforts. A good rule of thumb is to wait a minimum of 12 weeks from the initial submission before you begin making any substantial changes. This should provide enough time to see what is ranking well, what is not, and where you should concentrate your revision efforts.

### Don't get too competitive with Promotional SEM

It's easy to spend a lot of money on promotional SEM strategies, especially in the real-time bidding systems. Constantly trying to outbid your competitors by spending more money is not always the right answer. Stick with your business objectives and closely monitor performance results. Invest in top performing keywords, cut out the ones that don't measure up and always be on the lookout for new terms and phrases that can give you the performance you require.

### Implement a good traffic analysis system

There are many traffic analysis systems available, from free products to systems that will run you tens of thousands of dollars. It is important to have a thorough system that will help you understand how traffic is getting to your site, what the behavior of visitors is within your site, and how your site performs in general. You'll want to pay particular attention to metrics such as referrers, page views, visits and visitors, time spent in the site, and overall navigation through your site. With that said, choose a program that best meets your organization's budget and analysis needs. Two programs that are worth considering are Web Trends and LiveStats. Each of these

programs is available in a variety of feature sets designed to meet various needs and budgets.

### Use a qualified Search Engine Marketing Partner

Outsource or hire a SEM professional if you want to achieve top performance. SEM is a constantly changing science and requires a full time effort to stay on top of it. Most search engines do not clearly define how their engines work, and how they work changes regularly. SEM professionals interact with the various engines on a daily basis, communicate with SEM groups and other professionals, and in general are on top of all the subtleties of achieving quality rankings. With SEM, 'the devil is in the details'. A qualified SEM professional will save you months of effort and thousands of dollars helping you achieve your objectives quicker and more cost effectively.

## CONCLUSION

Like any winning marketing program, you will achieve success faster and easier by setting clear SEM objectives that are an extension of your overall marketing strategies and business objectives. There is no one magic formula for SEM as every website, market and organization is unique. However, all successful campaigns have well optimized websites, clear SEM objectives and measurement criteria, and use a combination of organic and promotional based SEM strategies.

This white paper is an introduction to Search Engine Marketing and provides a solid foundation for developing effective SEM strategies.

## **Appendix 2**

### **EC Travel Regulations**

## EC Travel Regulations

In 1992, British Consumer Travel Law created the Package Travel Regulations following a European directive as a result of numerous complaints throughout Europe of the lack of redress a consumer has with regards to package travel. There are close to 25 regulations that help to standardize agreements that travelers and trade enter into, and ensure that foreign travel is also protected.

The regulations dictate the following:

- Descriptive matter relating to packages must not be misleading
- Brochures must indicate in a legible, comprehensible and accurate manner the price and inclusions for all packages offered for sale
- Changes to product can only be made if there is a clause in any print material advising of possible adjustments and the consumer is advised prior to booking the package.
- The consumer must be provided with information regarding passport or visa requirements, information about health formalities required for the journey
- The consumer must be provided with information regarding transportation, especially where intermediary stops or connections are involved, as well as name, address & telephone number of accommodations or activity components plus the name and contact information for any on-site representatives there to assist during travels
- Price revisions will void any agreement between consumer and operator; however price revisions due to transportation costs (including cost of fuel) taxes or fees from airports, ports or the exchange rate are allowed
- If significant alterations need to be made, the operator will notify consumer immediately to enable consumer to withdraw without penalty or to accept the revision and confirm a different agreement and price (consumer compensated for difference if lower price determined)
- Whether the Operator is performing services & programs, or contracting another company/supplier is irrelevant, as the service promised must be delivered and Operator is still liable to ensure all service provided.
- There must be security in the event of insolvency – Operator must be able to provide sufficient evidence of security for the refund or repatriation of money.
- Proper insurance must be in place

In terms of compensation, a breach of any of the regulations can result in the awarding of compensation. In claims against tour operators, damages can be awarded for diminution of the holiday value; loss of enjoyment of holiday/mental distress & anxiety due to issues with the holiday organization;

pain, suffering & loss of amenity; or special damages for issues that arose during travel and have affected loss of earnings, travel expenses, lost possessions and therapeutic requirements.

While the regulations request that all complaints be submitted within 28 days after travel, the law does allow for a 3 year period within which to file any grievance.

Generally any complaints are filed shortly after travel, and will be brought to the attention of the Operator via the Travel Agent, intermediary or directly from the consumer. To avoid legal action, the Operator/supplier must carefully weigh the complaint and determine best course of action, whether it be a simply apology and acknowledgement, or compensation for the grievance. It could have a long term impact if not handled appropriately.

### **General tips to protect your business from Consumer laws**

- Provide information clearly to Operators
- Better to provide more information than required
- Do not make changes to product once it is in the marketplace
- Communicate with your chosen partners

## **U.K Market Overview**

Market Overview:

Product Interest:

Well-known icon product, soft adventure product, such as wildlife viewing or bird watching are amongst the product offerings the British tend to buy. There is interest in the Caribbean and Cuban product, as well as Hawaii. They tend to travel on vacations of 14 – 21 days in duration and the majority use 3 – 4 star accommodation.

Primary Travel Period & Lead Time:

Lead time for booking product has traditionally been anywhere from 4 months to one year prior to travel, although many operators are seeing a shift in this and bookings occurring one month prior to travel are much more common from this market. In terms of travel period, June through September as well as winter travel for ski product are most popular.

Marketing in the U.K:

This market is amongst the most developed globally, with the wholesalers accessing a sophisticated retail network comprised of large retail brands and/or consortia created by groups of independent travel agencies. Marketing is through all traditional channels such as advertising, direct mail, newspaper offers etc. At this stage Internet usage is primarily of the electronic brochure variety but discount airfare is growing rapidly.

**Appendix 3**  
**Market Reviews**

## **Market Reviews**

### United Kingdom

These travellers have the benefit of a strong currency and access to Guyana via Barbados and Trinidad. Travellers from the UK will venture into very soft adventure, but mainly those products offered on a daily or hourly basis. These travellers prefer wildlife & nature viewing activities – they are not risk takers! Birdviewing is extremely popular.

### **France**

The weakness of the Euro currency vs the dollar has caused the market to slow. Language is a barrier for this market and they are also very price sensitive – budget is definitely a barrier for long haul destinations! Adventure activities tend towards canoeing, wildlife viewing, culture discovery, gentle adventures. They enjoy driving cabin/chalet wilderness experiences as well as city hotels!

### **German**

This group of travelers is known as definitely much more adventuresome. They prefer longer adventures, love nature activities, and going where no one else goes. Most adventure product seems to appeal to this market, especially canoeing, horseback riding, rafting, wildlife viewing & nature. They love to travel, it is a very important part of their lifestyle. With vacation time of approximately 6 weeks per year this is not a surprise!

### **Switzerland**

This German speaking Swiss are very similar in their travel patterns to the German market, though a little more conservative in their experiences. The length of vacation is generally 14-21 days. This market has been fairly stable over the past few years.

### **Italy**

These travellers are very city oriented or lured to high end resort experiences. Not into adventure or nature experiences on a very large scale! They prefer city/resort stays, with lots of shopping available.

### **Netherlands / Belgium**

Travellers have similar interests to the German market, however are much more price sensitive.

### Australia/ New Zealand

This market has traditionally booked most of their vacations in individual segments –they tend to buy travel ‘modules’. It is common to pre book certain components and leave the rest undetermined. Therefore what interests them is often shorter multi day activities or daily activities that can be easily worked into their plans. They do prefer adventure such as hiking, canoeing, nature, wildlife viewing.



### Taiwan & Japan

These markets dabble very little in adventure experiences! Very gentle, very soft adventure, generally ½ to a full day in duration! They also tend to travel for short time spans – a 7 night package to South America visiting 5 countries in that time would not be unusual. A shift is beginning in the Japanese market as nature & wildlife, aurora viewing & honeymoon packages are becoming more and more popular. Security is a big factor for the Japanese traveler.

### Caribbean

Generally this market is interested in Guyana for getaway experiences (3 – 5 days), some nature discovery and relaxing in resorts. They also tend to be more of a conference and meeting opportunity for Guyana.

### **United States**

Because of proximity we find that this market chooses shorter vacations than the overseas markets (average 5 - 7 days). Retired or those with time & a very high disposable income are more likely to extend their vacation. What draws Americans is key icon product – something that they can't get in the US – this includes some of the very exclusive Lodges, Adventures, Ranches, Unique wildlife viewing. The US market can be appealed to by themed programs which capture their attention and fill them with the desire to explore the theme (ie. Culinary, wineries, Gardens, wildlife, architecture). The more adventurous and curious travelers are generally found more in Western U.S.

### Canada

Similar to the U.S. traveler in many ways, yet with a bit more worldly outlook. As with the U.S., most of the adventurous travelers are found in Western Canada, but additionally Quebec has a strong adventure base of travelers.

## **World Travel Market**

## **Press Releases**

## PRESS RELEASE

**October 27, 2003  
For Immediate Release**

### **Discover Guyana, South America's Last Frontier, at World Travel Market in London, November 10 – 14, 2003**

Little-known Guyana is an emerging gem in the nature and adventure tourism market. Situated on the northeastern coast of South America, touched by the Caribbean and Atlantic waters, and bordered by Venezuela, Suriname and Brazil, Guyana is a land of many contrasts. Often referred to as 'The English Amazon', Guyana's extraordinary wildlife, untamed rainforests and natural attractions rival the best nature and adventure destinations anywhere in the world.

Guyana is the only English-speaking country in South America, a legacy of its British colonial past. Georgetown, the country's capital, is situated on the northern coast of Guyana, at the tip of the Demerara River and is adorned with beautiful colonial architecture and well-maintained gardens. With a population of only 770,000 people in a land space the size of Great Britain, most of its interior is uninhabited. And, the people of Guyana are a treasure – six different races which together celebrate their rich heritage, culture and foods.

In the coastal interior and hinterland, lush virgin rainforests covering over 80% of the country remain isolated and undisturbed by civilization. A myriad of rivers provide passageways into the rainforests and interior, leading to the Amazon Basin. Far-stretching savannahs are home to working ranches, remote Amerindian villages and mountain ranges. Natural attractions are in abundance including thundering Kaieteur Falls, the longest single drop waterfall in the world, almost 5 times the height of Niagara Falls!

In Guyana, over 700 species of birds can be found including the Red billed and Toco Toucan, Cock-of-the-Rock, Scarlett Macaw and the Harpy Eagle. Here the elusive Jaguar roams, the Howler Monkey's haunting calls echo across the jungle and the Giant River Otter, Black Caiman, and the Arapaima swim freely in the rivers. Pristine Shell Beach on the northern coast is home to a unique eco-system of birds and mammals and is the annual nesting ground of four species of turtles.

Guyana offers the visitor a diverse range of accommodation - from adventurous hammock campsites, rustic cabins, comfortable lodges and unique jungle resorts, to business class city hotels. Though many resorts are in remote locations, the uniqueness and comfort of the accommodation, combined with mouthwatering foods and the warmth and hospitality of the Guyanese people make a stay in Guyana a most memorable experience.

Guyana beckons intrepid adventurers, as well as nature lovers. To learn more about this extraordinary, up and coming eco-tourism destination, visit Guyana at World Travel Market in London, in the Americas Hall S1, at booth LA #2000. Or explore Guyana online at [www.guyanatourism.com](http://www.guyanatourism.com) or [www.exploreGuyana.com](http://www.exploreGuyana.com).

For further information contact:

The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA): [visitguyana@networksgy.com](mailto:visitguyana@networksgy.com)

The Tourism & Hospitality Association of Guyana: [thag@networksgy.com](mailto:thag@networksgy.com)

## PRESS RELEASE

**October 27, 2003**  
**For Immediate Release**

### **Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, Guyana's Newest Attraction**

The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development ([www.iwokrama.org](http://www.iwokrama.org)) recently opened the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, a 154 metre long, state-of-the-art walkway suspended above the forest floor, within the canopy of the Iwokrama tropical rainforest in an area called Maushipari.

The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development is situated in the heart of Guyana's lush Iwokrama rainforest. In 1989 the Guyana government provided this one million acre pristine rainforest as a gift to the world. Today, Iwokrama is the only living laboratory entirely dedicated to the international community for the study of conservation and development of the rainforest.

Ornithologists have recorded 474 bird species in the Iwokrama Forest with an impressive 400 of these being resident. Iwokrama is also rapidly gaining an international reputation for its healthy jaguar population. Over 130 different mammals, 420 types of fish and 132 species of reptiles and amphibians have been recorded in the forest, including a number of species new to science.

The Canopy Walkway provides tourists and scientists alike with the unique opportunity to observe the flora and fauna of the rainforest from the vantage point of the canopy, with minimal impact to the environment. The middle and upper canopy is home to many species that are never seen at ground level such as fruit-eating birds and some humming birds, Spider Monkeys and Red Howler Monkeys. The lower level offers the opportunity to see Tapir, Jaguar and Peccaries as they pass through the undergrowth.

Designed and constructed by the Greenheart Conservation Company of Canada, with support from local labourers, this walkway is the first of its kind, using newly developed, low-impact, 'tree-hugger' technology which allows for the growth and movement of all of the trees in the walkway system. The walkway consists of five suspension bridges, and four canopy observation platforms, with the highest platform being 30 metres above ground. A unique hammock camp has also been developed on the floor of the rainforest, providing the opportunity for overnight stays.

Interpretation for the walkway is being provided by Iwokrama Rangers, young men and women drawn primarily from the local Amerindian communities. They are extensively trained in field biology of birds, mammals, freshwater fish reptiles, amphibians, forest plants, and tropical wildlife management. Additionally, they receive training in wilderness survival, first aid, indigenous skills and practices and concepts and methods of archaeology.

The management of the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway is being handled through a unique partnership between Wilderness Explorers, Rock View Lodge and Surama Village.

To learn more about Guyana and the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, visit Guyana at World Travel Market in London, in the Americas Hall S1, at booth LA #2000. Or explore Guyana online at [www.guyanaturism.com](http://www.guyanaturism.com) or [www.exploreGuyana.com](http://www.exploreGuyana.com).

For further information contact:

The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA): [visitguyana@networksgy.com](mailto:visitguyana@networksgy.com)

The Tourism & Hospitality Association of Guyana: [thag@networksgy.com](mailto:thag@networksgy.com)

## PRESS RELEASE

October 27, 2003  
For Immediate Release

### Guyana's Tourism Industry Wins Big at Ernst & Young 'Caribbean Entrepreneur of the Year' Awards

Little-known Guyana came out on top in the tourism category at the Ernst & Young 'Caribbean Entrepreneur of the Year' Awards held in Jamaica in October 2003. Guyana had a strong presence at these awards with Tony Thorne, owner of Guyana-based Wilderness Explorers being awarded '*Caribbean Entrepreneur of the Year*' in the Tourism category and Mokesh Daby of Grand Coastal Inn Inc. of Guyana one of two runners up in this same category. Their success exemplifies the quality of tourism operators that are now emerging in Guyana and starting to make their mark in the international tourism arena.

Guyana is South America's only English-speaking country, situated on the continent's northeastern coast, touched by the Caribbean and Atlantic waters, and bordered by Venezuela, Suriname and Brazil. Often referred to as 'The English Amazon', Guyana's extraordinary wildlife, untamed rainforests and natural attractions rival the best nature and adventure destinations anywhere in the world.

Tony Thorne has always had a love for exotic destinations. This native Australian joined the army at a young age and travelled the world. One of his trips took him to Guyana, a country that he later returned to and established Wilderness Explorers Company Ltd. ([www.wilderness-explorers.com](http://www.wilderness-explorers.com)). His company offers customised nature, adventure and cultural tours throughout Guyana, along with French Guiana, Suriname, Venezuela, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and St. Lucia. Despite Guyana's low international profile, Tony has lured adventure and nature lovers from North America and Europe, as well as documentary film crews from National Geographic, the BBC and many more.

Mokesh Daby was born in Guyana, however in his late teens migrated to the United States, where he attended high school and later university. On his first return to Guyana as a graduation gift, he fell in love and soon returned to the country for good. In 2000, he and his wife set up Guyana's first boutique hotel, the 19-room Grand Coastal Inn, situated along the shores of Guyana's east coast ([www.grandcoastal.com](http://www.grandcoastal.com)). The Inn offers personalized service, well-appointed guest rooms, an excellent dining room and a relaxed atmosphere. In late 2003, Mokesh will open a new 16-room boutique hotel in the heart of Georgetown, Guyana's capital city. His company is also a majority owner of the expansive Mainstay Resort, situated in the coastal jungle rainforests of Guyana. With clientele from the Caribbean, U.S., Brazil and the U.K, Mokesh is passionate about promoting Guyana as a prime destination for eco-tourism enthusiasts.

To learn more about this fascinating, up and coming eco-tourism destination, visit Guyana at World Travel Market in London, in the Americas Hall S1, at booth LA #2000 or explore Guyana online at [www.guyanatourism.com](http://www.guyanatourism.com) or [www.exploreGuyana.com](http://www.exploreGuyana.com). Wilderness Explorer's Tony Thorne will be at the Guyana booth and is available for interviews.

For further information contact:

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Mr. Mokesh Daby: [grandcoastalinn@networksgy.com](mailto:grandcoastalinn@networksgy.com)



## **Invitation**

## **Trip Report Recommendations**

# Recommended International Marketing Strategy for Guyana

## Background

Little-known Guyana is a 'gem in the rough' for the nature and adventure tourism market. Situated on the northeastern coast of South America, touched by the Caribbean and Atlantic waters, and bordered by Venezuela, Suriname and Brazil, Guyana is a land of many contrasts. Often referred to as 'The English Amazon', Guyana's extraordinary wildlife, untamed rainforests and natural attractions rival the best nature and adventure destinations anywhere in the world.

Guyana is the only English-speaking country in South America, a legacy of its British colonial past. With a population of only 770,000 people in a land space the size of Great Britain, most of its interior is uninhabited. The people of Guyana consist of six different races which together celebrate their rich heritage, culture and foods. They are one of Guyana's great assets – friendly, warm and hospitable.

Georgetown, the country's capital, is situated on the northern coast of Guyana, at the tip of the Demerara River and is adorned with beautiful colonial architecture. Once known as the 'Garden City', due to its numerous parks and well-maintained gardens, much of the beauty of the city has been deteriorating over the past 50 years, due to the impact of Guyana's tropical climate, poor economical conditions, and the lack of investment in building and facility upgrades. The city has gained a poor reputation for safety, more often due to the way the local media sensationalizes any bad news stories, versus the actual threat to tourists. Precautions need to be followed when traveling around the city, especially after dark, and there are places tourists should avoid going to. However, the actual incidence of crime against tourists is minimal and almost non-existent outside of the city.

Roads throughout the city are often unpaved and filled with potholes. Garbage littering canals and streets is a common sight. An abundance of stray dogs roam the streets, and the driving skills demonstrated by the Guyanese drivers make driving in the vicinity of Georgetown somewhat treacherous. The dreary arrivals area and the lack of information services at the Georgetown airport do little to welcome the tourist to Guyana. And, the gauntlet that needs to be run to get through the swarm of taxi drivers trying to solicit a fare at the airport is intimidating enough to potentially make a tourist turn around and catch the first flight home! Though Georgetown is Guyana's main gateway, the city and the airport does not provide a positive first image for the tourist.

In the coastal interior and hinterland, lush virgin rainforests covering over 80% of the country remain isolated and largely undisturbed by civilization. A myriad of rivers provide passageways

into the rainforests and interior, leading to the Amazon Basin. Far-stretching savannahs are home to working ranches, remote Amerindian villages and mountain ranges. Natural attractions are in abundance including Kaieteur Falls, the longest single drop waterfall in the world, almost 5 times the height of Niagara Falls.

In Guyana, over 700 species of birds can be found including the Red billed and Toco Toucan, Cock-of-the-Rock, Scarlett Macaw and the Harpy Eagle. Here the elusive Jaguar roams, the Howler Monkey's haunting calls echo across the jungle and the Giant River Otter, Black Caiman, and the Arapaima swim freely in the rivers. Pristine Shell Beach on the northern coast is home to a unique eco-system of birds and mammals and is the annual nesting ground of four species of turtles.

Guyana offers the visitor a diverse range of accommodation - from adventurous hammock campsites, rustic cabins, comfortable lodges and unique jungle resorts, to business class city hotels. Though many resorts are in remote locations, they provide unique and comfortable accommodation. The access to the resorts and lodges is primarily by water in the coastal regions or by air. However, some resorts are also accessible via four-wheel drive vehicles.

## **Challenges**

Even with all of these wonderful attributes, Guyana is still relatively an undiscovered destination, with only 1000 + true tourists, plus another 105,000 + visitors to the country annually. This latter number consists of approximately 90,000 Guyanese nationals returning home for visits, with the remainder consisting of visitors coming to Guyana to do business.

Guyana has a challenge ahead of itself to establish a productive tourism industry. There is a lack of awareness of Guyana as a tourism destination even in the nearby Caribbean countries, lack of knowledge by most international visitors of where Guyana is (South America, not Africa!), long-standing turmoil in the country due to political instability, drug wars and crime, the negative legacy of 'Jonestown', a lack of financial resources available to promote the country, an inconsistent presence in the international markets, limited media coverage with most coverage tending to be negative, plus a limited base of 'export-ready' tourism facilities and operations. This makes Guyana a hard sell in the international markets, despite its extensive natural attributes.

Guyana generally has a poor image in the international market, but this negative image starts at home. The majority of the population is living in Georgetown and the coastal regions and is economically challenged, thus they lack the financial resources to actually leave the region and explore the natural and cultural beauty of their country. They have a poor impression of their country and lack pride in their country. At the first chance available, many immigrate to another country and never return to live in Guyana. However, they do visit Guyana, with almost 90,000 of them per year returning to see family. And, when they do come back, they generally visit with their relatives in Georgetown, do not see anything of the country and thus return back to their new homeland with the same negative impression of Guyana. Their negativity fuels the bad image of Guyana in key centers such as New York, Toronto and London.

Additionally, since Guyana has no communications strategy, the majority of media coverage on Guyana is negative. The local Guyanese newspapers publish every brutal crime on their front pages in their full and gory detail. Then this negative news is transmitted around the world via their online newspaper websites. Thus, all anyone generally finds when they do a search on the internet for information on Guyana is negative media. Additionally, travel alerts issued for Guyana by countries such as the U.S. and Canada are pretty scary, thus any tourist considering traveling to Guyana would certainly stop to question why they would visit Guyana. Even the

Lonely Planet guide describes Guyana as a place for the 'Indiana Jones' type of traveler, thus positioning Guyana as a destination with a limited market appeal.

Over the past few years the challenges globally in the tourism industry have additionally impacted Guyana's tourism industry, with many hotels in Georgetown averaging occupancies of 30 – 50%, and resorts averaging 30% occupancy. Guyana has seen a decrease in arrivals to Guyana over the past few years and if this trend is not turned around, Guyana's tourism industry will be decimated. Already, resorts are closing down and both resort and city accommodations are starting to deteriorate due to lack of ongoing investment being made to maintain and upgrade the product. A few new boutique-style hotels have opened up to service the business traveler, and minor upgrades have been done to some hotels, but even larger hotels such as the Pegasus Le Meridien are challenged with wear & tear on their facilities.

One of the biggest concerns for Guyana should be the future of their resort product. The reason is that their rainforests, savannahs, waterfalls, rivers, birdlife and wildlife, which are of appeal to the international tourist, are situated outside of Georgetown. In order to experience this tourism asset, the accommodation base must be present. Guyana's resorts are extremely challenged as some coastal resorts rely on the returning Guyanese nationals who visit in limited numbers and some of the coastal resorts and most of the interior resorts rely on international tourists. Without a growth trend beginning to occur or subsidization of the facilities by the government to help maintain their operations, these valuable accommodation facilities will continue to close and then suitable access to Guyana's international tourism product will not exist.

Thus it is critical for Guyana to start making an impact in the international market in order to ensure the sustainability of their tourism product. This will only be done through a commitment by the Guyanese government and donor countries to funding that allows for long-term international sales and marketing strategies to be implemented, plus a strong communications and e-marketing strategy.

## **Funding Issues**

Guyana's limited international marketing efforts to attract non-Guyanese nationals to Guyana has either been funded through the support of donor countries through GTZ, USAID and CPEC or has been developed through the private sector efforts of Guyanese tourism suppliers, with the most visible being Wilderness Explorers.

A common concern amongst donor countries related to the continuation of funding support is the lack of a year-long strategy in key international markets by the Guyanese government. Until now,

donor funding has generally been directed at 'one-off' projects which lack follow through and are difficult to monitor for results. Donor countries have expressed a need for Guyana to commit to long-term, implementable marketing strategies in key markets in order for their funding to continue. Additionally, they want to see the Guyanese government at the 'table' as a financial partner, rather than the donors paying 100% of the costs.

According to Guyana's Minister of Tourism, Industry & Commerce, the GTA has recently been provided with a \$30 million Guyana marketing budget for 2004. This budget is approximately

\$168,000 USD and is to be used exclusively for marketing. A separate budget has been provided for the administration of the Guyana Tourism Authority. This is certainly a move in the right direction but to have any noticeable impact in the international markets, significant donor funding will still be required.

An important note in regards to this marketing funding is that the GTA budget is not only for international markets - a portion must also be used for domestic tourism marketing activities. Additionally, Guyana currently has a commitment of \$12 million Guyana per year to the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), which is a substantial drain on the GTA's limited marketing funds if this commitment must be taken from this budget. This contribution certainly must come under review regardless, as the ROI on this funding to date is non-existent, with little activity being undertaken by the CTO to promote Guyana. The only visible contribution is a one page article on Guyana in the CTO travel guide.

## **S.W.O.T. Analysis of Guyana**

### **Strengths**

- Breathtaking, untouched scenery – vast rainforests, waterfalls, rivers & savannahs;
- Blend of Caribbean and South American traditions;
- Incredible bird watching, wildlife, natural attractions & adventures;
- For the adventurous spirit, Guyana represents South America's Last Frontier;
- The only English-speaking country in South America;
- Diverse and delicious cuisine as well as award-winning rum and the 'worlds best sugar';
- Fascinating and accessible Amerindian culture;
- Home of the 'English Amazon', a positioning which Guyana should exploit;
- Accommodation suitable for most markets, though rustic to moderate only.

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of consistent marketing presence internationally;
  - No implementable, continuous marketing strategy in place;
  - Lack of coordinated funding by donor countries;
  - Institutional Constraints;
  - Funding Constraints;
  - Product Constraints;
  - Low Profile Market Position;
- 
- Limited marketing expertise & resources at GTA and amongst the Guyanese tourism industry;
  - Industry that lacks a 'team' approach;
  - Air access from key markets is challenging;
  - Limited means of providing the visitor to Guyana with what they can see & do once they are in the country.

## **Opportunities**

- Nature, wildlife viewing, eco-tourism, culture and learning vacations are growth sectors for the global tourism industry, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO);
- Growing interest in Caribbean beach vacations combined with eco-tourism experiences;
- Growing interest in multi-destination vacations in the region;
- Existing tour operator infrastructure in place in Guyana with a proven expertise in servicing international tourists;
- Accommodation available which suits budget and moderate level travelers;
- Over 64 million Americans use the internet to plan their vacation, providing Guyana with an affordable means to target this lucrative market;
- Interest by donor countries to continue supporting Guyana's tourism marketing efforts, as long as there is an implementable plan in place;
- Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) has the mandate to market Guyana and the authority to manage marketing programs co-funded with donor countries.

## **Threats**

- Terrorism impacts travel, thus any global challenges to the tourism industry will impact Guyana;
- Donor and government funding not a 'given' and must be applied for on an annual basis to each organization;
- Lack of apparent recognition by the government as to the overall value of tourism to the country thus funding could be reduced if perceived 'better opportunities' appear with other industries;
- Potential for violence and political instability in Guyana in the future;
- Potential closure of interior resorts will impact accessibility to Guyana's natural treasures.

## **International Marketing Opportunities**

Prior to the establishment of the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), any external representation of Guyana was done by either private sector tour operators or the Tourism & Hospitality Association of Guyana (THAG). With their limited resources, plus the support of donor funding from USAID, GTZ and CPEC, they have made small steps in creating an awareness for Guyana.

Guyana has been active in several international markets over the years, through participation by THAG and some of the Guyanese private sector at key travel shows such as World Travel Market in London and ITB in Germany. Both of these activities received donor funding. Additionally,

Guyana has had a presence at events targeting the Guyanese communities in Toronto, New York and London, sometimes supported by the Guyanese Consular and High Commission staff. Within the Caribbean and Latin America, there has been some representation at trade and consumer shows in countries such as Barbados, as well as representation by Wilderness Explorer at the annual Latin America Marketplace where they have appointments with international tour operators interested in Guyana.

With the establishment of the GTA, Guyana has the opportunity to establish a continuous sales, marketing and media presence in key markets. To do this requires the implementation by GTA of

a strategic plan centered on key markets and focused on travel trade sales, co-operative marketing efforts, e-marketing and in-market media relations which is partnered with donor funding agencies, the Guyana tourism industry, and international tour operators.

Additionally, a Global Communications Strategy must be implemented by the Guyanese government that is not reliant on the GTA marketing funding. This strategy must take a global approach to creating a positive awareness of Guyana, in the consumer and business media with a focus on creating this awareness in countries with strong trade, investment and tourism generation potential. Preliminary discussions with the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce in November 2003 at World Travel Market explored the opportunity for a Communications Strategy to be funded by a separate budget, with the goal to improve Guyana's overall image in the global marketplace in support of tourism, trade and investment into Guyana. This approach was met with a somewhat positive response, thus requires more investigation.

GTA has expressed an interest in establishing a year-round presence in key markets and has been considering proposals which have been presented to them from organizations in both Germany and the U.S. Both proposals have elements which are essential to ensuring a successful entry into these markets. However, both proposals also present a challenge from a financial perspective, as they require funding to a level that is currently not feasible for Guyana.

Additionally, both proposals are lacking a complete exposure of costs required to implement the strategies presented. In order to commit to any company to undertake the sales and marketing role for Guyana in the international markets, a fully detailed plan must be developed which outlines all costs and activities to be undertaken, as well as an action plan with timelines, responsibilities and outcomes to be achieved, plus projections on tourism arrivals so that the plan can be monitored and revised as needed on an annual basis. This is the only way that GTA can determine what they can and cannot afford to do and thus have a realistic, coordinated and professional approach to the markets.

## **Building an Effective Approach to International Markets must include:**

### **Sales & Marketing Plan & Implementation**

- Annual marketing and action plan developed in partnership by GTA and donor countries for each market that identifies all activities, costs, dates, person responsible and outcomes desired, plus a means for monitoring results;
- The Guyanese government must take a 'hands-off' approach to the day to day administration of the GTA – once the annual budget has been provided, they must give the GTA the mandate to develop their plan to budget, obtain approval from government to go forward with the plan and then provide the GTA with the autonomy to implement the plan without intervention or approvals required from government related to activities in the approved plan;
- GTA management must have management staff with the expertise and authority to administer, direct, implement and monitor the approved plans and budgets;
- Support from a consultant in an advisory role is recommended for the first year to ensure the plan is being implemented effectively.



## **Sales & Marketing Strategy**

### ***Markets:***

- Focus efforts directed at the international, non-Guyanese visitor in the U.K, Germany, U.S. and Canada;
- Focus efforts directed at the Guyanese nationals in London, New York and Toronto;
- Limited efforts directed at the Caribbean & South American market, primarily focusing on media relations and some presence at consumer/trade shows where the Guyanese suppliers express an interest in having a presence;

### ***Activities:***

- GTA to coordinate any efforts targeting the Guyanese nationals in London, New York and Toronto with the Guyanese Consulates in Toronto and New York and the High Commission in London;
- In-market sales representative contracted on a year-round basis in Germany, U.K. & North America (covering U.S.A. & Canada) to focus on the non-Guyanese market. Representation is not full-time, but is done on a retainer basis for a minimum number of days per month, with office expenses being included as part of the retainer fee;
- Any activities in the Caribbean or South America to be coordinated by GTA & THAG;
- In-market Sales Calls/Sales Missions/Events implemented by local representatives, including Guyanese travel trade when possible, targeting niche tour operators that specialize in adventure, wildlife viewing, and cultural programs;
- Consistent and professional presence at trade shows/marketplaces in key markets coordinated by in-market contract staff on behalf of GTA, and supported by Guyana's private sector, including a presence at World Travel Market in London, Bird Viewing Show in the U.K., ITB in Berlin, Learning Travel Conference in Washington, D.C., Adventure Travel Show in Chicago; Latin America marketplace;
- Pre or post show events to maximize awareness of Guyana amongst trade, media and consumers;
- Pre & post show communication with travel trade and media to ensure maximum exposure and results;
- Coordinate familiarization tours for qualified tour operators;
- Advertise in directory publications that also have a website presence; for example, the Specialty Travel Index in North America;
  
- Co-op advertising with in-market tour operators in niche media to maximize bookings of their Guyana packages;
- Develop joint promotions in partnership with Guyanese businesses, i.e. DDL to assist in broadening the reach of Guyana's marketing message;
- Develop marketing partnerships with BWIA and other airline carriers servicing Guyana from key markets, to ensure their support with trade and media visits as well as visual presence of Guyana in their marketing programs and in-flight videos and magazines;
- Development and management of a GTA and in-market sales representative's database to allow for the opportunity to personalize correspondence and maintain a relationship with potential and existing travel trade that support Guyana. This includes being able to target

mailings appropriate to the interest of each tour operator, i.e. a database which can be segmented by the tour operators interest in bird viewing, wildlife, culture, adventure, etc.

### **E-marketing Strategy**

- Register GTA website with search engines;
- Ensure that the GTA website is prepared for top performance in search engines including rich content, and search engine ‘friendly’ text;
- Implement organic search engine marketing strategies, to ensure low cost, long term and sustainable presence on the search engines, including reciprocal links with tourism organizations, online travel directories, THAG, Guyana’s tourism suppliers, organizations such as DDL, etc.;
- Implement Pay-per-Click marketing program with search engines, carefully selecting key words to be purchased and maintain daily management of website traffic to monitor effectiveness.
- **Implement a good traffic analysis system, including the usage of tracking codes, in order to monitor effectiveness of the e-marketing strategies;**
- **Contract with a qualified Search Engine Marketing Partner to implement the e-marketing strategy.**

### **Media Relations Strategy**

- Guyanese government to contract with an International Media Relations firm to implement a high level Communications Strategy that works in partnership with the GTA to help promote Guyana as a tourism destination, but is funded by the Guyanese government through a Communications budget, not the GTA marketing budget;
- In-market Media Relations activities undertaken by local representative which is supported by GTA as well as the International Media Relations team and includes year-round exposure of Guyana in front of the media, primarily trade publications, niche magazines, adventure, wildlife and cultural writers via press releases focused on specific activities/themes, personal meetings with media and participation in any media networking opportunities;
- Development of story ideas and regular press releases to ensure constant exposure of Guyana to appropriate media and distribute these via traditional means as well as online media relations services;
- In-market promotions with media which includes trip giveaways provided by Guyanese suppliers in partnership with in-market tour operators;
- Coordinate familiarization tours for qualified media;
  
- Development and management of a GTA and in-market database of media to allow for the opportunity to personalize correspondence and maintain a relationship with interested media. This includes being able to target mailings appropriate to the interest of the journalist or medium, i.e. database to segment by interest in bird viewing, wildlife, culture, adventure, etc. or type of media.

### **Tools Required to Support Sales, Marketing & Media Activities**

- Information website with links to Guyana suppliers and tour operators, THAG, Iwokrama, and in-market tour operators that promote Guyana;
- Sales kit for travel trade/tour operators;
- Media kits & Press Releases;

- Consumer brochures in English and German, (potentially Portuguese & Spanish for regional marketing in the future);
- Display materials and posters for trade shows/marketplaces/promotions;
- CD Rom of print quality images for brochures and media use;
- Video footage of Guyana for use in promotions, on airlines, on website as streaming video.

**Blue Ice Communications Inc. is a communications, marketing and representation company dedicated to providing individually tailored services for the tourism industry. Blue Ice Communications Inc. provides a “one-stop” service for new and existing businesses to effectively enter and grow their business within the complex global tourism marketplace.**

Through our respected in-house team as well as outside professional associates, Blue Ice Communications Inc. is able to provide your organization with a comprehensive range of professional services to support the growth of your tourism business.

*All services are offered on an hourly or daily rate, monthly retainer or per-project basis. Determination of service costs will be made upon consultation with the client.*

**Marketing & Communications:**

- Strategic marketing plans
- Action plans
- Media & public relations
- Advertising design and placement
- Development of brochures, direct mail, postcards, invites, etc.
- Brand/logo development
- E-marketing & e-commerce
- Direct mail programs
- Multi-media production
- CD development
- Newsletters
- Qualified translation services
- Professional copy writers
- Website design & development

**Product & Package Development:**

- New product development
- Package & itinerary development
- Product training & workshops

**Sales, Promotions & Representation:**

- Direct sales globally to tour operators, travel agencies, on-line travel companies, cruise lines, meeting & incentive buyers
- Attendance at trade & consumer shows and marketplaces – including organization and pre & post show activities
- Worldwide brochure and distribution
- Database development & management
- Sales representation in Canada, U.S., Germany, U.K., Australia and Asia
- Coordination of tourism events
- Coordination of site inspections and familiarization tours for media and trade
- In-market sales promotions
- Creation of joint marketing initiatives

**Consulting Services:**

- Research & market profiles
- Technology development
- Business plan development

